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In the exposition of his material, Mr. Longnon is clear, direct, and reasonable. He treats disputed points without dogmatism; after a fair discussion of all sides, he pronounces in favor of the view which seems to him to have the best support. Following this method, he is forced to deny the claim to an eastern origin for the family as made by the poet and his descendants. He posits as the date of the poet's birth, Saturday, September eleventh, 1525, believing that Ronsard, when he was looking up his family record, misread || as two instead of eleven. He develops at length a new theory of the chronology of the poet's trips to Scotland and England. Finally he puts the famous first meeting with Du Bellay in 1547 instead of in 1549, so that the publication of the *Défense* in the latter year no longer seems an anomaly. While in all of these questions Mr. Longnon's arguments may not be conclusive, they are more than plausible, and his deductions far more probable than those of any preceding biographers.

Perhaps the most attractive feature of the *Essai* is the way in which the writer has presented his subject. With no sacrifice of accuracy he has given us a book that is entertaining, readable, and full of well chosen citations; one that interests us in the author, in his doings, and even in the little questions of biographical detail that are usually so tiresome. We most assuredly hope that Mr. Longnon will not be content to drop his study at this point, but will extend it to a complete history of Ronsard, the man and poet.

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OTTO HARNACK, *Aufsätze und Vorträge*. Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1911. iii + 327 pp.

The significance of this book lies in its being the exponent of a culture and art ideal best exemplified by Goethe, an ideal which—largely on account of his potent influence—has never, in spite of the growth of realistic art and specialization, lost its hold on the German imagination. A few names, like Tirsch, Herman Grimm, Victor Hehn among scholars and critics, and Grillparzer, Heyse among literary artists, bear witness to this statement. Culture, according to this conception, should be the expression of the largest possible intellectual sympathy combined with a sense of form, and art should wed a Greek instinct for beauty with an interest in the ever-recurring, universally important, rather than in the exceptional and hyper-idiosyncratic. Harnack, whose *Life of Schiller*, whose fundamental treatises on the aesthetical principles of the German classics, and whose numerous essays on kindred subjects, have long since proved him a most adequate and thorough interpreter of eighteenth century German culture, here again, in his lucid and mellow style, unrolls before us a series of studies which prove his profound inner relationship with the author of *Faust* and *Iphigenie*.

It is, therefore, not surprising that the bulk of the book should deal with Goethe. The very first essay, "Die Bedeutung des Zeitalters der Aufklärung für unsere Zeit," interprets the spirit of intellectual hospitality and toleration characteristic of the Age of Rationalism, and is a fine protest against the exaggerated race-individualism of our day. "Wandlungen des Urteils über Goethe" shows how the poet's personality, often obscured and distorted in the nineteenth century by party-hatred, by ignorance, or by ephemeral literary fashions, at present is becoming more and more an informing power in the formation of a new culture ideal in contemporary Germany. "Zu Goethes hundertfünfzigstem Geburtstage" emphasizes the value of Goethe's ideal of synthesis and harmony as a corrective in an age of specializa-

tion like ours. "Goethe über künstlerische und mechanische Tätigkeit" discusses the sage of Weimar as a leader in the protest against the artistic degeneration ushered in by the spread of machinery—especially English machinery—in the nineteenth century. That the protest culminated in most brilliant fashion in two Englishmen, Ruskin and Morris, is a significant fact which Harnack ought not to have passed over in silence. In opposition to views maintained by Brandes, Harnack shows in "Hochgebirgs- und Meerespoesie bei Goethe," that Goethe was one of the earliest and greatest of the interpreters of the ocean, though—characteristically—not of the German Ocean, but of the Mediterranean.

The four essays on Schiller, though less original than those on Goethe, help to emphasize the contours of the book. That Harnack's ideal does not exclude intelligent appreciation of problems of modern life appears in the remaining pages of the work which deal with subjects like "Zur Entwicklungsgeschichte des deutschen Dramas im 19. Jahrhundert," "Zur Würdigung der dramatischen Kunst Hebbels," "Paul Heyse," "Zu Björnsons Gedächtnis," etc. The essay on Heine marks a refreshing reaction in favor of this great literary artist.

Yet we must add that here and there Harnack seems to underrate the positive contributions of some of the nineteenth century ideals when they happened to be out of harmony with Goethe's tenets. So the comparative indifference towards Italy on the part of modern painters, which Harnack criticises, is due in large measure to the discovery of many beauties in northern landscape to which the eighteenth century was blind, and hence is not merely a sign of deterioration. Goethe's contempt for German art and art-criticism of the early nineteenth century, for which Harnack has no word of disapproval, was distinctly a sign of limitation on his part. We feel now, that with all its faults, German Pre-Raphaelism—Wackenroder, Schlegel, Overbeck, etc.—ushered in a great new movement which reached its zenith in Ruskin and the English Pre-Raphaelites. Again, in the essay on the dramatist Grabbe,

not sufficient justice is done to the extraordinary originality implied in Grabbe's laying the entire emphasis on the environment, and hence completely freeing his tragic hero from the traditional "moral guilt"—and that as early as 1831, long before Hebbel's "Maria Magdalena" (1844), and even earlier than Alfred de Vigny's "Chatterton" (1834).

Whether we agree or disagree with Harnack, however, we must feel on every page of this last book from his pen, as we have done in the case of all his other contributions, that we are in contact with a personality at once sound in method and elevated in spirit, as well as endowed with a sense of form—a type of mind never more welcome nor more needed than among us to-day.

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CORRESPONDENCE

THE SOURCE OF BRITANNICUS, II, 6

To the Editors of Mod. Lang. Notes.

SIRS:—The celebrated scene of Nero's eaves-dropping upon Junie and Britannicus has a close parallel in Rotrou's *Bélisaire*, a tragedy written some twenty-seven years before Racine's.¹ Junie, it will be remembered, is required to speak with her lover, knowing that Nero is watching them from a hiding place and that any display of affection for Britannicus will be fatal to him. Similarly the Empress Theodora tantalizes her rival in *Bélisaire*. She had loved Belisarius when she was an actress in the Hippodrome, but he had neglected her for Antonina, so that now, as Empress, she is seeking to avenge her unrequited affection. In the first act she forbids Antonina to recognize her lover when he presents himself before the Emperor on returning from a victorious campaign. Later, she leaves her rival alone with Belisarius, after warning her that if she shows her feeling for him, he will be put to death,

¹ *Bélisaire* was published in 1644, probably first acted in 1642 or 1643; the first performance of *Britannicus* was on Dec. 13, 1669.